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INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 6737
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 4414
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
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RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
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SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/A,DRL/NESCA
NSC FOR WOOD
OSD FOR SHIVERS
CENTCOM FOR CG CJTF-101 POLAD

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SUBJECT: AFGHAN UN HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

1. The GIROA will issue a Universal Periodic Report (UPR) on its human rights record at the request of the UN's Human Rights Council (UNHCR). The government is open to including a modestly robust criticism of the its recent track record on human rights, especially in relation to treatment of prisoners, rule of law, and the failings of the court system. Local NGOs may lack the sophistication to participate effectively in the review.

Report Due By Spring 2009

2. President Karzai has appointed an 11-member (10 men, one woman) committee headed by Foreign Minister Spanta to finish the report by April 2009. As with other countries' UPRs, UNHRC requests the GIROA submit a 20-page description of the human rights situation. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, NGOs, academic institutions, and civil society representatives may also submit shadow reports.

3. The drafting committee includes Mohammad Farid Hamidi, a commissioner with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), who briefed PolOff on the committee's first two working meetings. Additional committee members include representatives of the justice, defense, and social affairs ministries, as well as civil society representatives and a law professor from Kabul University.

4. Although UPRs for some countries have sparked numerous shadow reports from local NGOs and human rights watchers, Afghanistan's weak civil society and small number of NGOs working outside of the humanitarian assistance field may struggle to take advantage of the opportunity to provide alternate assessments of the GIROA's human rights record. Other AIHRC staff not associated with the government-appointed UPR drafting committee said they have begun meeting with the NGO community to encourage human rights watchers to pool resources and submit a shadow report together.

WOOD